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A SHIGERU MIYAMOTO and CHRIS MELEDANDRI Production

CHRIS PRATT
ANYA TAYLOR-JOY
CHARLIE DAY
JACK BLACK
KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY
BENNY SAFDIE
DONALD GLOVER
ISSA RAE
LUIS GUZMÁN
KEVIN MICHAEL RICHARDSON
and BRIE LARSON

Written by
MATTHEW FOGEL

Produced by
CHRIS MELEDANDRI, p.g.a.
SHIGERU MIYAMOTO

Directed by
AARON HORVATH and MICHAEL JELENIC

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## THE SYNOPSIS

Following the global phenomenon that brought *The Super Mario Bros.* to the big screen in 2023 and earned more than $1.3 billion, Illumination and Nintendo reunite for an all-new, action-packed chapter: *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*.

After settling into their new life in the Mushroom Kingdom, Mario (CHRIS PRATT) and Luigi (CHARLIE DAY) are drawn back into action when a mysterious call for help points toward the unexplored past of Princess Peach (Golden Globe winner ANYA TAYLOR-JOY). The

mission pulls Mario and Luigi—and their new family of friends—off familiar ground, launching a sweeping intergalactic journey across new worlds and with unexpected alliances.

The film reunites the all-star original cast, including Golden Globe nominee JACK BLACK (*Jumanji* films) as Bowser; Emmy winner KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY (*The Lion King*) as Toad; and Emmy nominee KEVIN MICHAEL RICHARDSON (*American Dad!*) as Kamek. They are joined by new cast members including Emmy Award winner BENNY SAFDIE (*Oppenheimer*) as Bowser Jr.; Emmy and Grammy winner DONALD GLOVER as Yoshi; Emmy and Golden Globe nominee ISSA RAE as Honey Queen, LUIS GUZMÁN as Wart, and Academy Award® winner BRIE LARSON (*Captain Marvel*) as Rosalina.

The film is directed by returning Golden Globe nominated filmmakers AARON HORVATH and MICHAEL JELENIC (collaborators on *Teen Titans Go!*, *Teen Titans Go! To the Movies*) and it is written by returning screenwriter MATTHEW FOGEL (*Minions: The Rise of Gru*), with Emmy Award nominee BRIAN TYLER (*Fast X*) returning to compose the score.

From Nintendo and Illumination—creator of the global blockbuster *Despicable Me*, *Minions*, *Sing* and *The Secret Life of Pets* franchises—*The Super Mario Galaxy Movie* is produced by Illumination's Academy Award® nominated founder and CEO CHRIS MELEDANDRI, p.g.a., and by Nintendo's Representative Director and Fellow SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, the creator of Mario.

The film's executive producers are BRETT HOFFMAN, BILL RYAN and YUSUKE BEPPU. The film's co-directors are PIERRE LEDUC and FABIEN POLACK and the film's co-producers are BRICE COLINET and KELLY LAKE. *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie* is co-financed by Universal Pictures and Nintendo and will be released worldwide by Universal Pictures.

## THE BACKSTORY

When *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* opened in 2023, it became a global phenomenon and the highest-grossing film adaptation of a video game in history. The film, now ranked among the highest-grossing animated films of all time, affirmed the cultural permanence of the *Super Mario Bros.* after more than four decades at the center of popular culture and it marked a defining moment in Illumination's run of global animated hits. For Illumination and Nintendo, it also signaled the start of an ongoing creative partnership grounded in shared stewardship of Super Mario's cinematic future.

"The response to the first film was deeply gratifying for all of us," Illumination founder and CEO Chris Meledandri says. "You always hope an audience will connect with something you have made, but the scale of that connection exceeded anything we had anticipated. What made it especially meaningful was seeing longtime fans embrace it alongside audiences discovering these characters for the first time. Nintendo was a true

partner in every decision on that film, and I think audiences felt that. It gave us the confidence to continue building in a way that respects the legacy while looking ahead."

With the first film's success still reverberating, the question became which corner of the *Super Mario* universe to explore next. "This new film gave us room to expand," says Shigeru Miyamoto, Nintendo's representative director and fellow, the creator of Mario and a producer on both films alongside Meledandri. "When we develop video game titles, we make the outline for the series' future. But in our work with Illumination, Chris-san and his team proposed a few different paths for us. That was refreshing, and it showed us how valuable another perspective can be. I did not have a clear vision for the second movie, but when they suggested *Galaxy*, everything fell into place. I looked back at the history of the series and realized that, after *Super Mario Bros.*, *Galaxy* was a major turning point. The first movie's story was much more contained. This movie takes our story to outer space, and I am thrilled that it expands the setting to a cosmic scale. I think what defines *Galaxy* is its sense of grandeur."

The game *Super Mario Galaxy*, released by Nintendo in 2007 as the third installment in the series' landmark 3D era, remains one of the highest-rated video games ever made. It sent Mario into outer space for the first time, propelling players across spherical planetoids, each governed by its own gravitational pull. The design introduced a more directed, cinematic progression while preserving the series' spirit of invention. Nintendo's 2010 follow-up, *Super Mario Galaxy 2*, deepened that approach and cemented the *Galaxy* games as one of its creative high points.

For returning film directors Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, *Galaxy* offered an expansive canvas. "*Super Mario Galaxy*, to us, was an opportunity to expand the world in every direction," Horvath says. "The first movie was very classic. We were focused on the retro spirit of *Super Mario Bros*. At the time, we thought we had put all our best ideas into that movie, but then we discovered that there was a huge universe left to be uncovered. Bringing *Galaxy* onto the big screen gave us so much more visual real estate and sense of scale."

The expansion was conceptual as much as visual. "I love the *Galaxy* games because they exemplify the creativity of Nintendo," Jelenic says. "You have these small planets that are incredibly charming, and the way gravity shapes the gameplay is so much fun. Taking those playful ideas and translating them into narrative was one of the most exciting parts of making this movie."

Expanding the universe also meant expanding what was at stake. "The first film was driven by Mario's character journey as this little guy who never gives up," returning screenwriter Matthew Fogel says. "In this one, the theme became the power and importance of family, which felt right because the experience of playing Nintendo is very much a family

experience. People respond to characters who are facing something enormous together. They want to see how they rely on each other. The bigger the adventure, the more room you have for real emotion, and family is what gives this movie its emotional scale."

Realizing a world of this magnitude required discipline as much as imagination. "When you are telling a story on this scale, readability is paramount," Jelenic says. "You want to focus the audience's attention, but in a world this expansive, something is happening everywhere you look. It becomes a lighting challenge, an animation challenge and a character challenge. There are layers of activity in every direction. You still have to choreograph the action so people can follow it and not get lost in the environment."

Among the film's most striking achievements is its reimagining of outer space. "The space environments in this movie turned out beautifully," Horvath says. "We did not want it to feel like our characters were drifting in a black void. We wanted to create a version of space that felt distinctly *Super Mario*. We worked closely with the animation team in Paris to design landscapes filled with nebulae and star fields that feel warm, bright and inviting, which is kind of the opposite of how we usually imagine space."

Translating gameplay to film also meant calibrating tone. "When you are working with tiny planets and cute characters that can undercut the sense of scale," Jelenic says. "In the first movie, we worked hard to establish real scope and stakes, even when the villains have a certain charm. That was something we continued to think about here. How do you take elements designed for gameplay, many of them inherently cute, and make them feel cinematic? We leaned into that charm, but we also made sure the action and the stakes created a strong contrast."

For Miyamoto, the film reflects a long-held vision of Mario's evolution. "When I first created Mario, there was already a more famous and older character named Mickey Mouse," Miyamoto says. "When I envisioned Mario's future, I thought of how Mickey grew alongside movies and animation. So, I decided Mario would grow alongside video games. Now, we have him evolving through movies, too. The first *Super Mario* movie introduced our core characters and established what this world could look like on the big screen. Now, we really begin to see the dynamics between them more clearly, and in that sense, it sets the stage for the future of the series."

That sense of shared purpose defines the Illumination-Nintendo collaboration. "From the beginning, Miyamoto-san and Nintendo have trusted us to take something they have spent 40 years building and bring it to audiences in a new medium," Meledandri says. "We do not take that trust lightly. Every decision we make on these films is in service of that legacy. With *Galaxy*, we saw an opportunity to evolve the franchise in a meaningful way."

The film is also a celebration of the broader *Super Mario* universe. Packed with references, discoveries and unexpected character pairings drawn from decades of games, it rewards longtime fans while inviting new audiences further in.

Arriving in the wake of the franchise's 40th anniversary in 2025, this new film comes at a moment when Mario remains as culturally relevant as ever. "There are so many surprises, mashups from other games and characters that you would never expect to see," Horvath says. "The level of discovery in this movie is incredible. I think fans will appreciate the attention to detail, the expansion of the story and the depth of these characters. They will be glad to see the world of *Galaxy* so faithfully represented, but also the surprise environments and crossovers. There is something here for every generation of fan, and I hope audiences take away a great story about family, and that after seeing it, they appreciate their own a little more."

## THE CHARACTERS

The world of the *Super Mario Bros.* games has always been defined by characters who are instantly recognizable and widely beloved, yet their inner lives have remained largely unexplored. For directors Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, returning to this universe meant deepening those identities. "One of the most exciting things for us about returning to this world was getting to work with the cast again," Jelenic says. "These are some of the most talented people in the world. Being able to create with them and define who these characters are is a real pleasure. The first film confirmed that we were on the right track, so this time, everyone felt comfortable pushing the characters further."

That confidence translated into specificity. "Our goal with these films is to expand the world that people know from the Nintendo games, and one of the best ways to do that is through the characters," Horvath says. "The games give you bold, iconic characters. The film allows us to explore what drives them, what they want and where they come from. That is where the world starts to feel richer."

### MARIO

### CHRIS PRATT

After saving both his Brooklyn hometown and the Mushroom Kingdom, Mario, voiced again by Chris Pratt, continues to prove that the smallest hero in the room can also be the bravest. In *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*, Mario sets off on his most expansive journey yet. "Mario is still our everyman hero," director Aaron Horvath says. "He is extremely loyal to the people he loves, and his journey here is about holding on to that loyalty even when the stakes feel overwhelming. Every decision he makes comes from a genuine belief in doing the right thing."

At his core, Mario's power has never been about size or strength. "He is a little guy, but he never gives up," Pratt says. "He is unstoppable because he believes in himself. He is not boastful; he just shows up for the people he cares about. I love his relationships with his brother, his family and with Peach. No challenge is too big for him, and that is what makes him heroic."

Seeing that spirit translated into animation left an impression on Pratt. "When I saw the first movie, I was floored," Pratt says. "With animation, you do not see the world coming together the way you do on a live-action set. Watching the finished film and seeing my name as Mario was surreal."

*Galaxy* grounds the story's adventure in surprisingly sincere questions. "There are some seriously thought-provoking themes in this film," Pratt says. "Questions about identity, and being defined by how others see you, and knowing when to embrace that and when to reject it."

Pratt's energy in the recording booth has become central to the character's evolution. "Working with Chris is one of the great joys of making these movies," director Michael Jelenic says. "He is so much fun to record because you ask him for a line and he does not give you one version. He gives you 50. Then, he starts improvising, and just when you think he has exhausted every idea, he finds 20 more."

For Pratt, the film's focus on brotherhood carries weight. "My brother and I grew up playing the *Super Mario* games together," Pratt says. "The film captures something true about having siblings. You know each other your whole life. You go through everything together. Some relationships are fleeting, but siblings are for life. It means a lot to be able to bring that to the screen. When we were kids, my brother always got to play as Mario. Now I finally get my turn."

### PEACH

### ANYA TAYLOR-JOY

Peach returns in *Galaxy* as the assured, charismatic ruler of the Mushroom Kingdom. While she proved herself to be a formidable fighter and a natural leader in the first film, this time, Peach's story turns inward. Peach has long defined herself by the responsibility of protecting others, but she has never fully understood her own origins. "Peach has always been a strong and capable leader, but there is a missing piece of her story," director Aaron Horvath says. "Exploring that felt like a natural progression. In searching for her origins, we see a vulnerability that makes her more relatable."

For Anya Taylor-Joy, who returns to voice the character, that shift deepened the role. "At the start of *Galaxy*, it is the eve of Peach's birthday, and everyone is celebrating her, but she is off looking at the stars," Taylor-Joy says. "That is when we learn that she does not

know where she comes from. She knows that she was found by the Toads and raised to become someone who could protect them. She is far more introspective this time. She is searching for a sense of belonging and identity."

But that introspection does not temper her resolve. "My favorite moments of Peach are when she is fighting hand-to-hand," Taylor-Joy says. "This film gives her incredible action sequences. I would love to be able to do what she does in this film in real life, but if I never get the chance, I am glad that Peach did it for me."

Taylor-Joy remains acutely aware of the character's legacy. "When you think of iconic video game characters, Peach is one of them," Taylor-Joy says. "Getting to be the person who voices her and brings her into this new chapter means the world to me."

**LUIGI**

**CHARLIE DAY**

Mario's younger brother has always been the more cautious of the two, but what Luigi lacks in bravado, he makes up for in heart. In *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*, he remains alongside Mario for the full adventure. "Luigi is very sweet, and at times, both incredibly anxious and almost overly brave," screenwriter Matthew Fogel says. "But we did not have much opportunity to explore beyond that in the first film. This time, we knew we wanted more from him, and we wanted the brothers together for the whole film. Exploring Luigi in moments of innocence, fear and genuine bravery was exciting."

For Charlie Day, who returns to voice Luigi, the character's appeal is rooted in his vulnerability. "Luigi has that underdog sensibility," Day says. "With Mario, you get the classic hero who runs toward danger to save the day. With Luigi, you have the guy who says, 'I want to save the day, but I also do not want to get hurt,' and I think that makes him relatable. His innocence is something you root for, because he loves his brother enough to follow him anywhere."

That optimism is not naïveté. It is conviction. "Luigi is the kind of person who sees the good in everyone," Day says. "He believes that everyone is redeemable and has the capability of being kind and overcoming their past mistakes. There is something powerful about a character who says, 'Someone could be bad, but that does not mean they are always going to be bad.'"

For Day, the experience carries personal weight. "I have a son who is fourteen now, and watching this movie, I became emotional remembering how much joy these games gave me as a kid," Day says. "I would play with my sister and my friends, and we would get lost in this world. Both through the movie and through watching my son discover gaming on his own brings me back to that time. That is the power of this world."

Mario and Luigi's relationship is shaped by a deliberate creative instinct. "In

storytelling, it can be tempting to create conflict between the two people who are closest," director Michael Jelenic says. "But we have always felt that these brothers are so sincere and their relationship is so pure that forcing that tension would feel false. Luigi sees the best in everyone, including his brother, and Charlie brings a warmth and humor to him that makes audiences want to be his friend."

### BOWSER

### JACK BLACK

Jack Black returns to voice Bowser, the King of the Koopas. After the events of the first film left him defeated, miniaturized and imprisoned in Peach's castle, Bowser is attempting, at least in theory, to be better. With reluctant guidance from Luigi, he approaches reform as a self-described work-in-progress.

That effort is tested by the arrival of his estranged son, Bowser Jr., who is less interested in redemption than in restoring his father's reputation. Now, Bowser is forced to confront an uncomfortable question: can he become the father his son wants without reverting to the villain he is trying to outgrow? "We wanted the audience to feel that Bowser has changed, or at least that he is trying to," director Aaron Horvath says. "He is not just putting on a show. There is genuinely good in him. When you play something like *Mario Kart*, Bowser is not trying to destroy the race. He is just another competitor going for the trophy. There are spaces where these characters can coexist and exploring that idea was fun for us."

For Black, that tension fuels the performance. "Bowser's got rage in his bones," Black says. "That is part of the deal. But he also wants love. He wants respect. He wants to be seen as more than just the bad guy. In this one, he is trying to evolve. He is working on his art, trying to meditate, maybe not blast fire at the first inconvenience. But when your kid looks at you and says, 'I liked you better when you were evil,' that messes with your head. Suddenly the old instincts start calling."

Black was careful not to dilute what makes Bowser unpredictable. "We could not sand off all his edges," Black says. "Bowser has to stay dangerous. If he is too nice, he is not Bowser. But there is something interesting about watching him wrestle with who he wants to be. He has a volcanic temper. Sometimes he contains it, other times he absolutely does not."

That intensity carries into the recording booth. "Jack is a true professional," director Michael Jelenic says. "People know him for his big personality, but he approaches the role with incredible focus. It is physically demanding. Because of the abrasion he builds into Bowser's voice, he can only record for a couple of hours at a time before, as he likes to say, his 'esophageals start to bleed.' But in those sessions, he gives everything. You can hear

that effort in every scene."

**TOAD**

**KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY**

After helping Mario and Luigi save the day in the first film, Toad, voiced by returning actor Keegan-Michael Key, has earned a promotion. He is now Peach's right-hand aide, and he takes the job seriously. He is small, fearless and perpetually prepared. In *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*, Toad accompanies Peach into unfamiliar corners of the galaxy, and his loyalty to her remains unwavering. What *has* changed is his confidence. "In small visual details that eagle-eyed fans will notice, we suggest that Toad has been on some adventures between the two films," director Aaron Horvath says. "He has seen more of the Mushroom Kingdom and beyond, and that experience has helped him grow."

Growth, however, does not spare him from insecurity. Yoshi's arrival shifts the group dynamic, and Toad feels the displacement. "We love Toad's bravery and loyalty, despite his size," screenwriter Matthew Fogel says. "But we wanted to give him more complexity here, which comes through his jealousy of Yoshi. When someone new enters your world and suddenly commands everyone's attention, that can be both funny and relatable. The idea that Toad would feel threatened by the sweetest character imaginable was something we could not resist."

**BOWSER JR.**

**BENNY SAFDIE**

Bowser Jr., voiced by Benny Safdie, is determined to restore honor to the Bowser family name and win his father's approval. In *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*, he marshals his father's army of Koopas and wields a powerful magic paintbrush, which can summon anything from weapons to massive creatures. But his motivation is simpler and more personal than world domination. He wants his dad back.

Bowser Jr. grew up with a father more devoted to conquest than parenting. "Bowser loves his son, but he was too busy to be there for him while he was growing up," director Aaron Horvath says. "Bowser was focused on taking over the world, not being present as a father. Now, Jr. has become obsessed with impressing his father, just so he can spend time with him."

Safdie was drawn to the emotional psychology of the character. "I love the games and I loved the first movie, so when I was asked to be part of this, it was an easy yes," Safdie says. "Jr. is a kid who grew up watching his dad try to take over the world. That becomes the standard he thinks he has to meet. So, of course he goes to extreme lengths. It is the only way he thinks he can get his dad's attention."

What makes Bowser Jr. dangerous is the same thing that makes him a child: his imagination. “His paintbrush allows him to turn whatever is in his head into something real,” Safdie says. “That is terrifying when you consider what he is capable of, but it is also the most childlike thing about him. A paintbrush like that is every kid’s fantasy.”

The character’s design draws directly from the games. “Bowser Jr.’s classic look is cute and approachable,” Horvath says. “When we were developing the film, *Super Mario Wonder* was released, and in that game, he wears a jagged, almost monstrous armor. In this film, when he needs to fight, he uses his paintbrush to create that armor and transforms into something much more intimidating.”

That duality required a specific kind of performer. “Benny can take what is probably the most challenging character in the movie and make him adorable, sensitive and vulnerable,” director Michael Jelenic says. “Then he turns on a dime and becomes genuinely scary. Only a world-class actor can do that so convincingly.”

### YOSHI

### DONALD GLOVER

Audiences who stayed through the end credits of *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* were treated to the first hint of Yoshi’s arrival. *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie* delivers on that promise. Yoshi, voiced by Donald Glover, enters the story early after being rescued by Mario and Luigi and quickly becomes their most loyal companion. His elastic tongue, boundless appetite and irrepressible enthusiasm make him both unpredictable and indispensable.

Yoshi has been part of the *Super Mario* universe since his debut in 1990’s *Super Mario World*, and the filmmakers were keenly aware of the expectations that come with him. “Yoshi is everyone’s favorite, and we felt that responsibility from the start,” director Michael Jelenic says. “He does not need dialogue to steal a scene. The animation team gave him enormous personality through his movement and expressions alone. What people have always loved about Yoshi is his sincerity and his joy, and we wanted every moment with him to reflect that.”

### ROSALINA

### BRIE LARSON

Rosalina, voiced by Academy Award® winner Brie Larson, is the intergalactic protector and adoptive mother of the Lumas, the star-shaped creatures who live in the cosmos. Her command of cosmic energy makes her one of the most powerful forces in the galaxy. Even so, her authority is grounded in care. The Lumas look to her for guidance and protection, and she does not take that responsibility lightly.

For Larson, the role was personal. “I have been a massive Nintendo fan my entire life,

so Rosalina was a big part of my childhood," Larson says. "When I was growing up, she felt otherworldly and mysterious. Through this film, I was able to understand more of her backstory and her complexity. She is much more than calm and peaceful. Yes, she is a natural and loving caretaker, but she is also a warrior, and she has lived through sacrifice."

In *Galaxy*, Rosalina's strength takes on multiple forms. "There is strength in the safety she creates for the people around her," Larson says. "She will do whatever she can to protect her Lumas. There is also strength when it is time to fight. She stands up for what she believes in and for the people she loves. And she has to learn how to let go. That is difficult, but she does it because she is strong. She is someone who carries responsibility and chooses how to wield it."

Larson's connection to the character shaped the performance. "Brie is not only an incredible actor, but she is a true fan of the games and understands what these characters mean to people," director Michael Jelenic says. "That combination brought something to Rosalina that we could not have found anywhere else. There is a warmth and gravity to her performance that is exactly what the character needed."

## THE MUSIC

For the score of *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*, the filmmakers turned to Emmy nominated returning composer Brian Tyler, whose work on the first film fused his original themes with Koji Kondo's iconic music from the games, establishing a musical language that felt both authentically Nintendo and distinctly cinematic. With *Galaxy*, Tyler expands that vocabulary to meet the film's cosmic reach. "The joy of scoring these two *Super Mario Bros.* movies has never been taken for granted, especially as both a film composer and a fan who grew up playing the games," Tyler says. "After the wonderful experience of scoring the first film, I was excited to see where we would go next. The scale and epic quality of this film are undeniable. The score needed to support that incredible feeling of diving into another universe. I wrote many new themes, using orchestra, choir, and synths to create an epic sound that invites the moviegoer to dive in fully."

At the center of Tyler's approach was the challenge of building something that felt immediate to longtime fans while still driving the story forward. "I needed to strike a balance between the familiarity fans enjoy, moving the story's drama forward, and creating a musical landscape that is both nostalgic and new," Tyler says. "I used symphonic instruments alongside sounds from around the world, and even elements from the game the film is named after."

The *Galaxy* score includes references to more than 300 pieces from across the *Super Mario* game series, threading them so seamlessly into the film that audiences may not always distinguish Tyler's themes from Kondo's. For Tyler, that blur is the highest

compliment. “Between the two films, people would come up to me and sing themes I wrote for the first movie, not realizing they were new,” Tyler says. “They assumed they were Nintendo themes. That is the best thing I could hear, because it means the music feels like it belongs.”

For all the scale and orchestration, Tyler insists the foundation is simple: melody. “You do not gild the lily,” Tyler says. “You do not layer ornamentation just to make something feel big. I write melodies that are easy to remember and hum along to. Then, we surround them with orchestra and choir and let them grow. A child can recognize the tune, and an adult can appreciate what is happening around it.”

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